

GRANDFATHER GREY

By the Author of

THE WOOING OF
GRANDMOTHER GREY



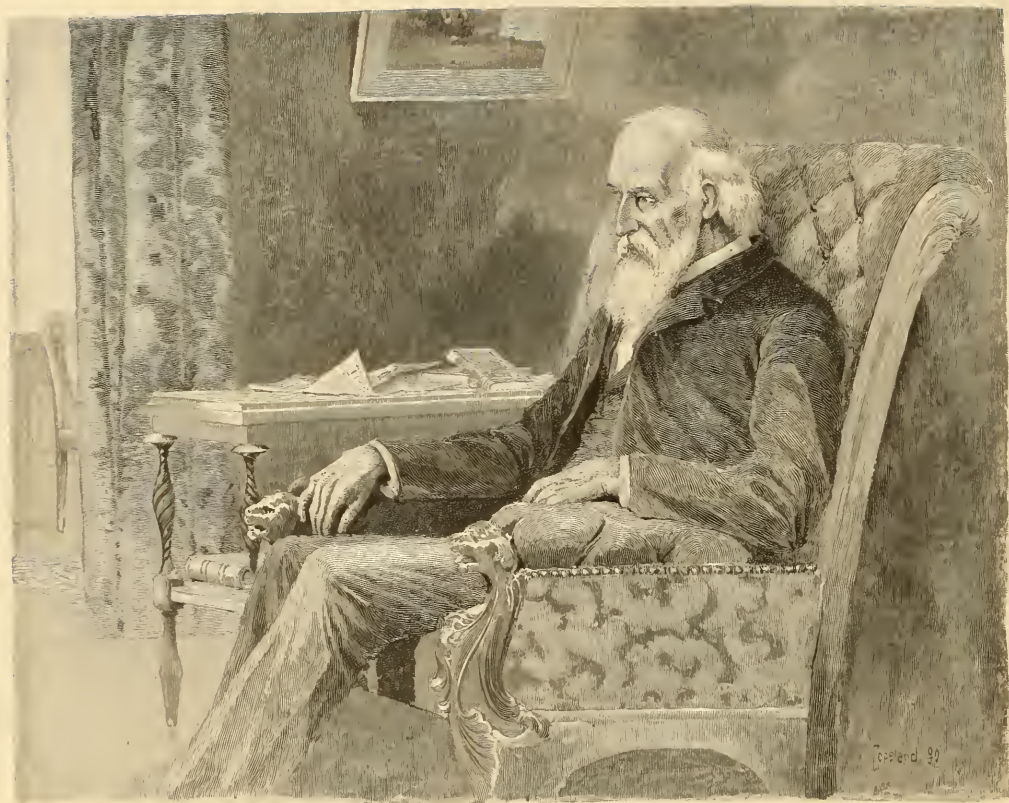
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A COMPANION TO GRANDMOTHER GREY

GRANDFATHER GREY

BY

KATE TANNATT WOODS

Illustrated

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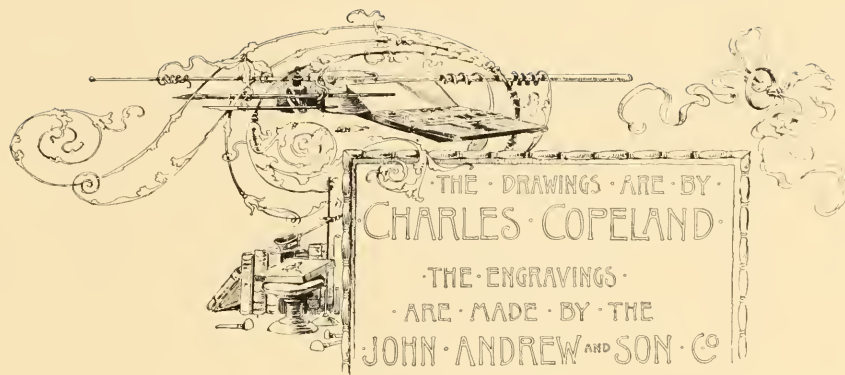
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GRANDFATHER GREY

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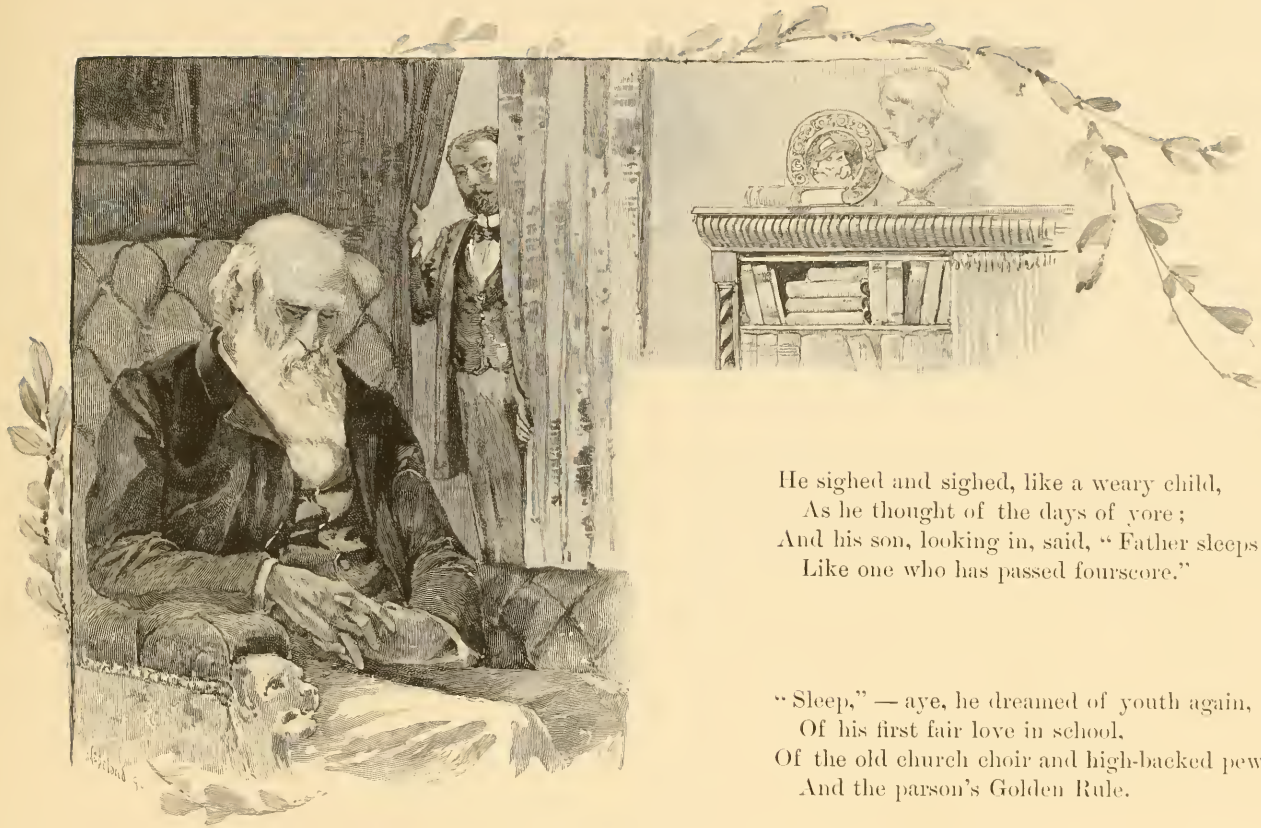


GRANDFATHER GREY.

BY MRS. KATE TANNATT WOODS.

GRANDFATHER dwelt in his son's grand home,
With servants in livery fine ;
And Grandfather sat at his son's grand board,
And tasted his rare old wine.

His easy-chair was of softest plush,
His footstool of blue and gold ;
And the fire burned low in a costly grate,
While he thought of the days of old.



He sighed and sighed, like a weary child,
As he thought of the days of yore ;
And his son, looking in, said, " Father sleeps
Like one who has passed fourscore."

" Sleep," — aye, he dreamed of youth again,
Of his first fair love in school,
Of the old church choir and high-backed pews,
And the parson's Golden Rule.

He saw little Huldah, plump and fair,
With his rival sitting near ;
And he heard her voice, her girlish voice ;
Ring out full loud and clear.

He saw the bass-viol “ up in the seats,”
The girls in their dresses gay,
And the boys in their weskits spic-and-span,
Dressed up for the Sabbath day.

Hark! they were singing “ Old Zion ” again ;
And the “ mountain tops ” might well appear,
For Grandpa stood on the heights of love,
With Huldah singing so near.

“ Glorious conflict, glorious conflict,”
She sang as never before :
While the people stared from the pews below,
On the dear old meeting-house floor.



Over the pulpit grand and high
The music went floating away,
While the gray-haired parson softly prayed
For his brave young choir that day.

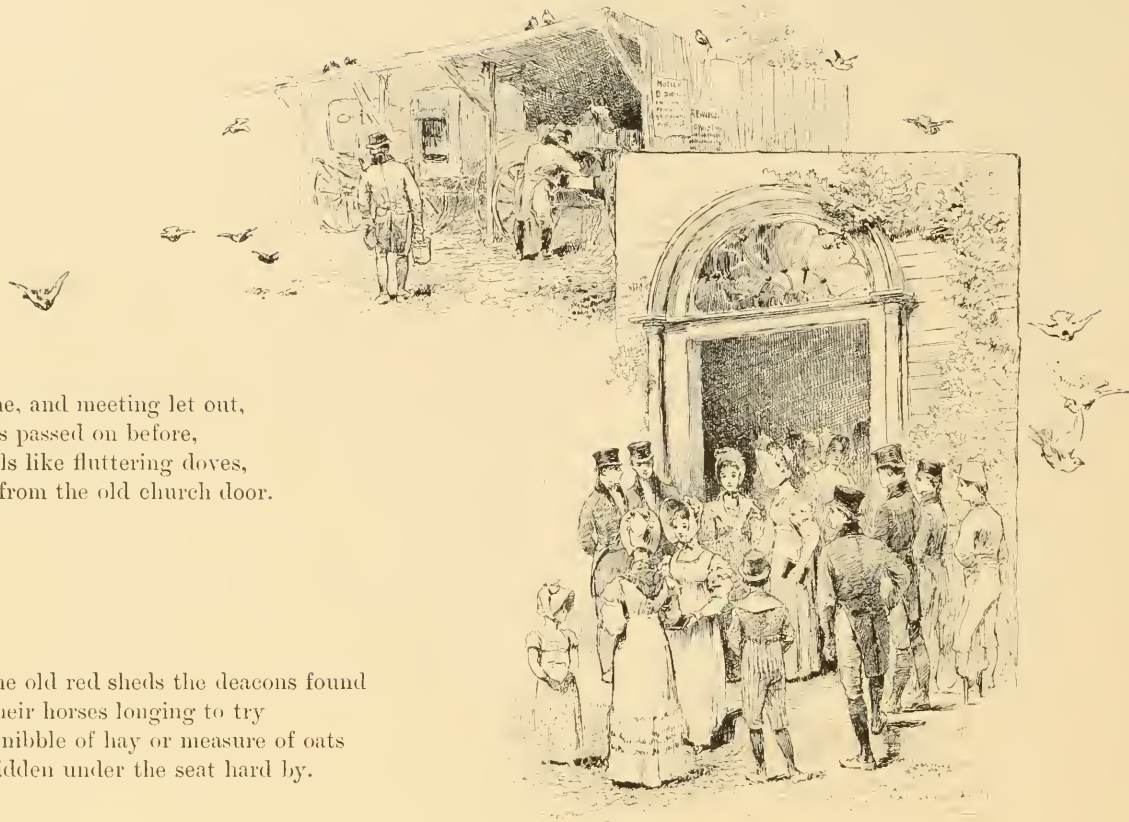
What matter a rival more or less,
With Huldah smiling so?
Her kerchief over her bosom pinned,
As white as the driven snow.

What mattered the shriek of the viol now,
Or the squire's frown in his pew? —
Grandpa was singing the sweetest song
Of love so old, yet new.



At last noon came, and meeting let out,
While the boys passed on before,
To watch the girls like fluttering doves,
As they came from the old church door.

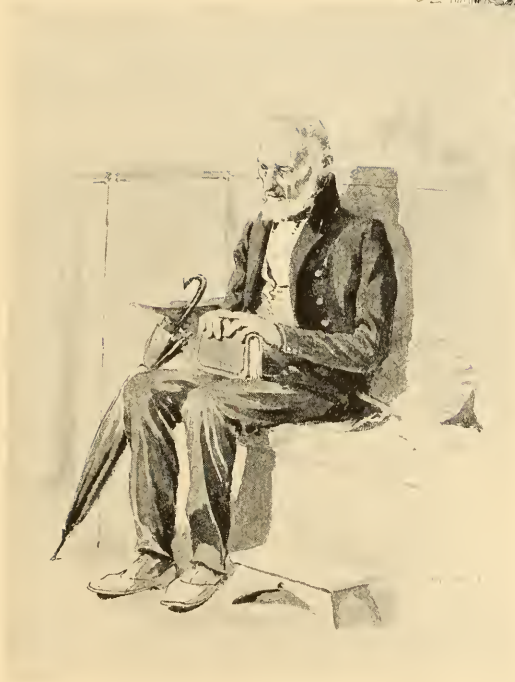
In the old red sheds the deacons found
Their horses longing to try
The nibble of hay or measure of oats
Hidden under the seat hard by.



Oh, that nooning hour of the long ago,
With its mystic charm for all,
From the awkward lad to the city girl,
And the horse in its open stall.

Oh, the dainty charm of a stroll with one
So near, and yet so far,
Till the bell tolled out the nooning done,
And the pew-doors stood ajar.



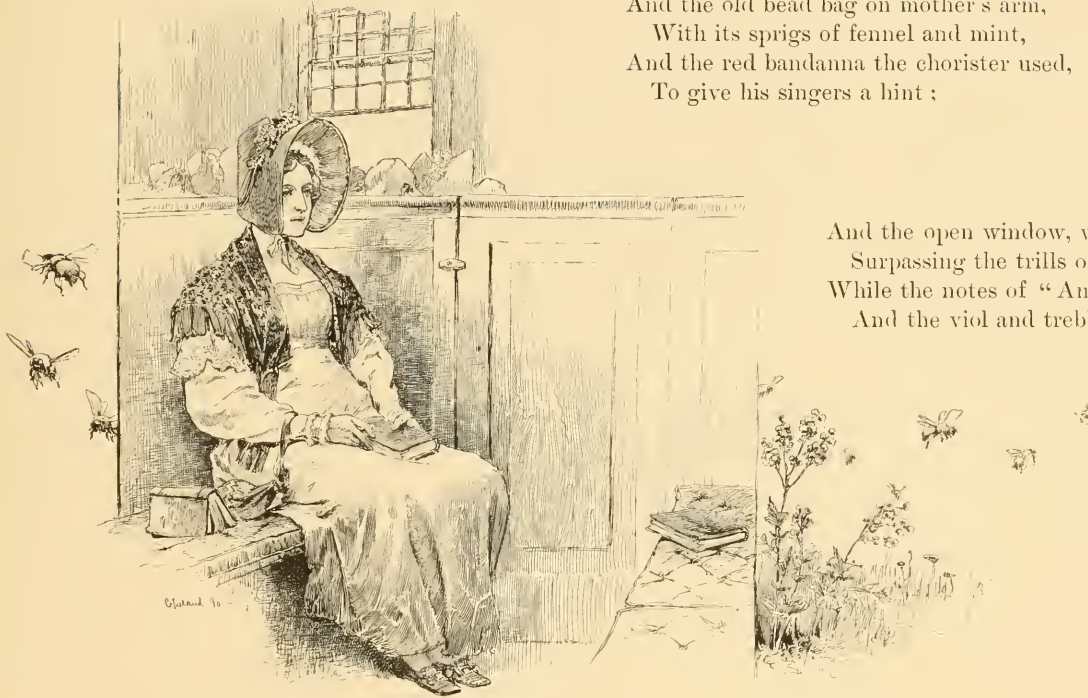


Oh, the clang and the bang of the sheep-pen pews,
As the seats went up and down,
And the shy, shy looks of the country lads
At the pretty girls from town.

Oh, that sounding-board with its heavy frown,
Hanging over that head so gray,
And the sleepy child in the corner pew,
And the deacons who dozed away ;

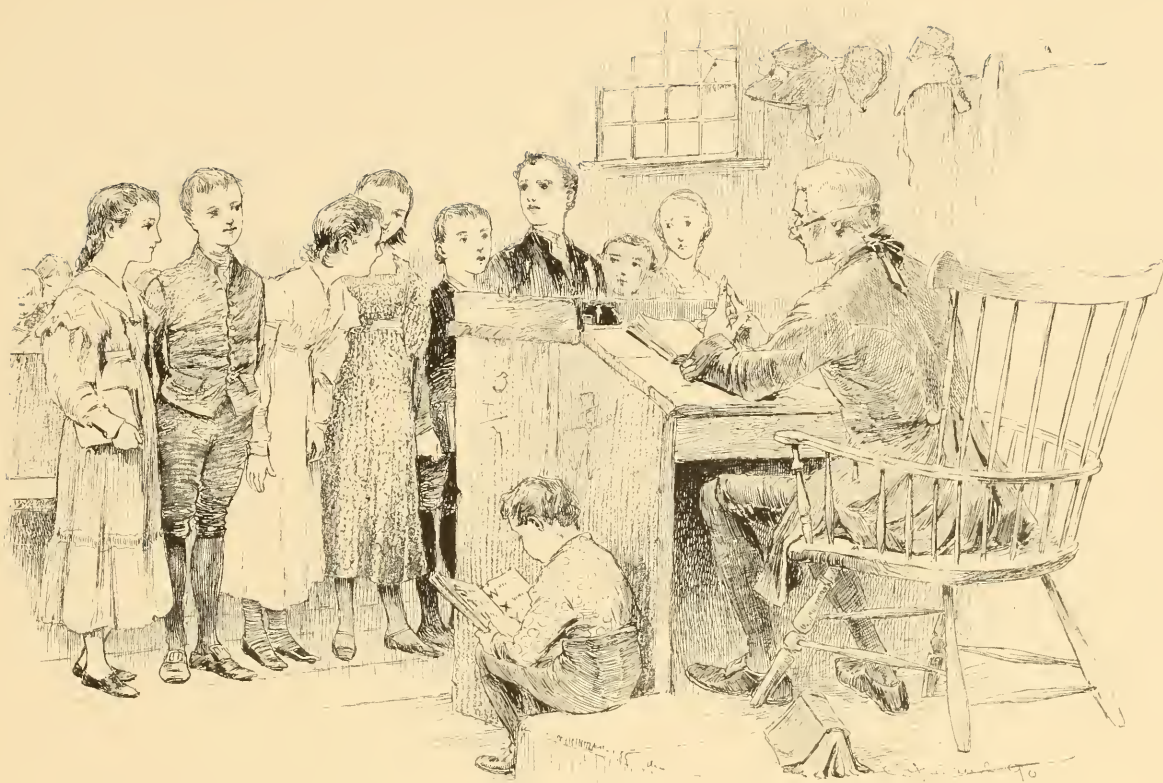
And the old bead bag on mother's arm,
With its sprigs of fennel and mint,
And the red bandanna the chorister used,
To give his singers a hint :

And the open window, with hum of bees
Surpassing the trills of the choir,
While the notes of "Antioch" floated aloft,
And the viol and treble soared higher.





Oh, the sweet, soft odor of new-mown hay
Which wafted in that day
From the burying-ground behind the church,
Where Grandfather's ancestors lay.



The meeting-house faded from Grandpa's sight,
And he stood in the school-house red,
In a goodly class of boys and girls,
With Huldah up at the head.

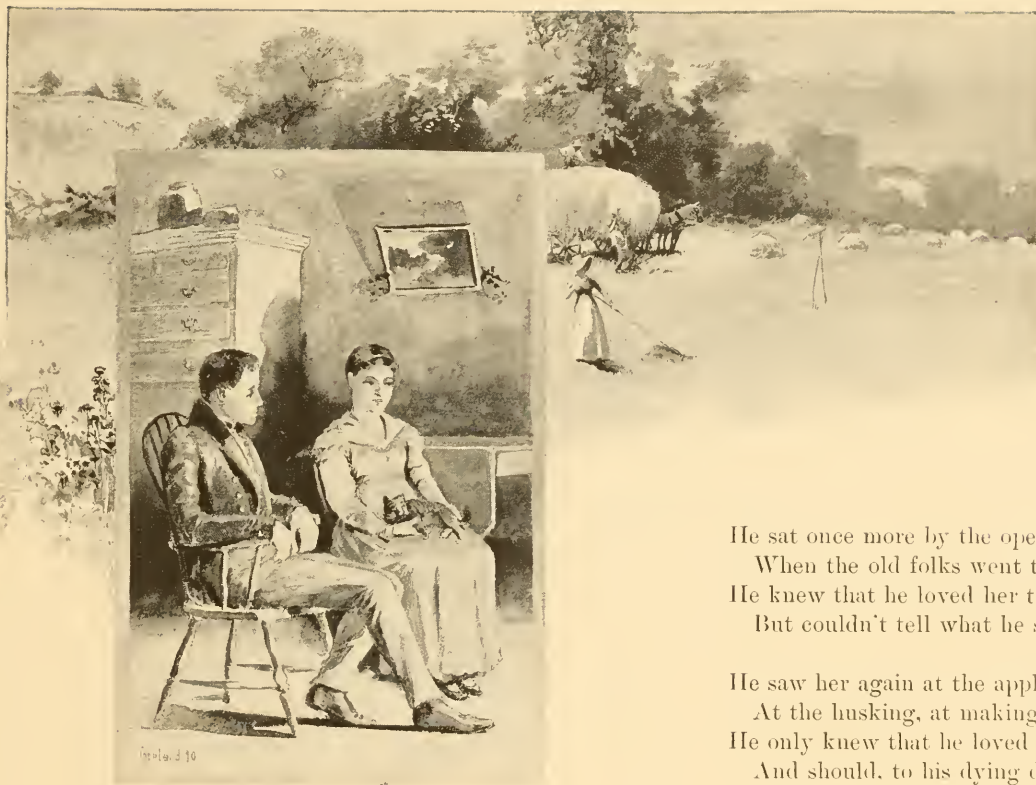


Again he saw the old spelling-school,
Where “taters” the candlesticks made ;
And the flickering light on the roughened walls
Made pictures never to fade.

And Huldah, his darling, spelled them all down,
Even Ben, the Squire’s young son,
And the gay young man who came from town
“To see how the thing was done.”

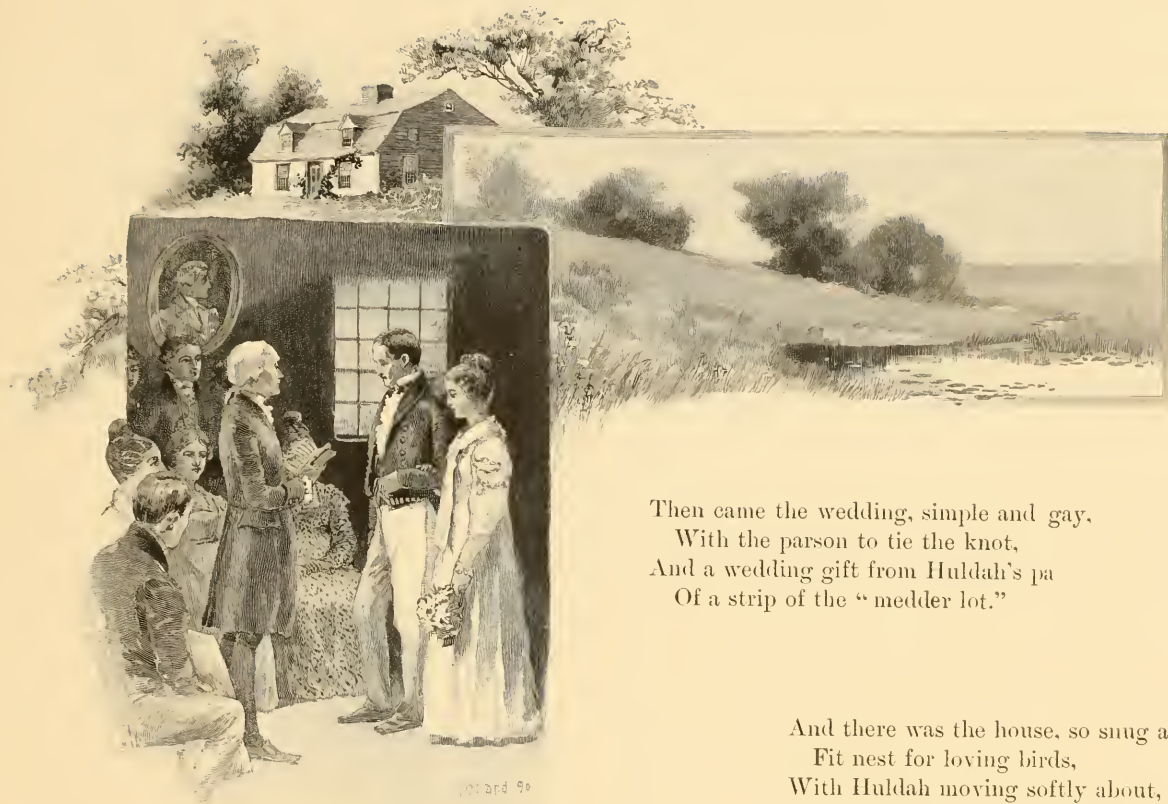
Then Grandpa went home with Huldah that night ;
Fair girl, with her eyes so blue.
Half hid by the puffs of her “punkin hood,”
Which covered her blushes, too.





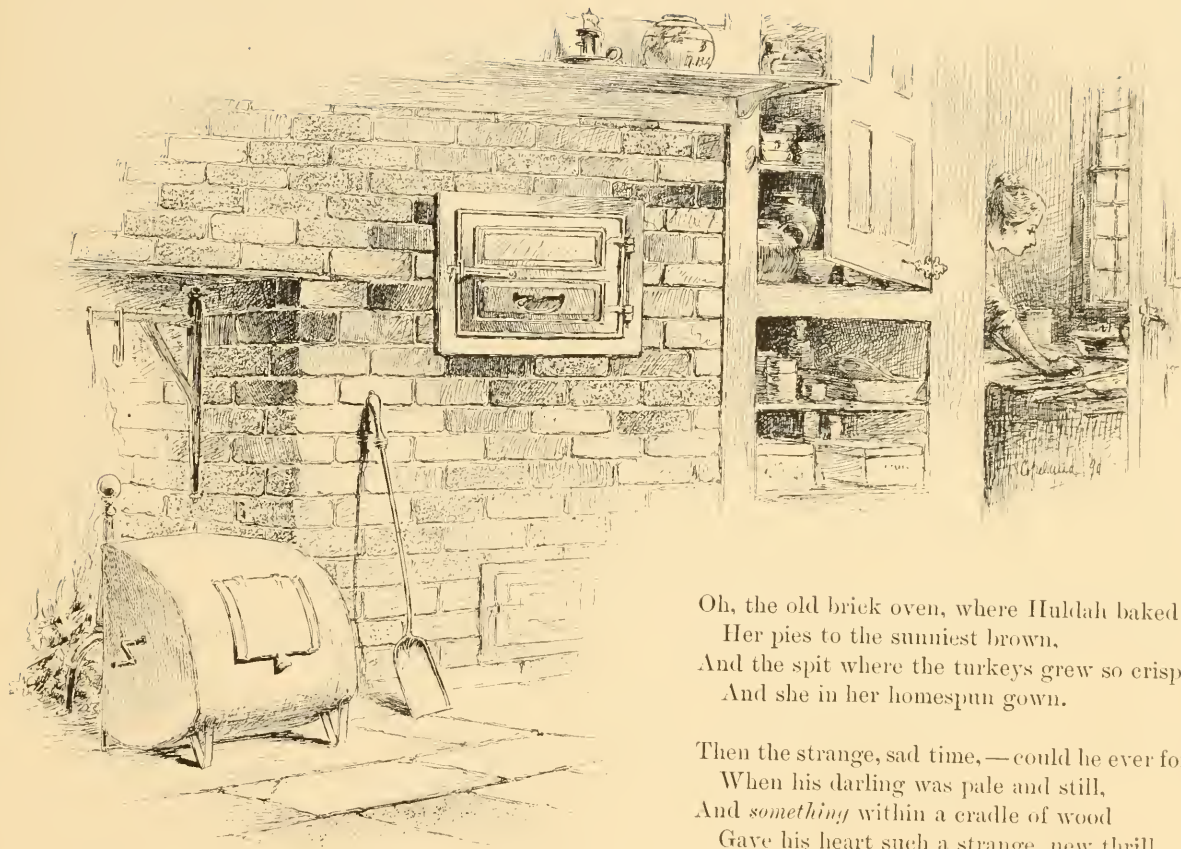
He sat once more by the open fire,
When the old folks went to bed :
He knew that he loved her through and through,
But couldn't tell what he said.

He saw her again at the apple-bee,
At the husking, at making hay :
He only knew that he loved but her,
And should, to his dying day.



Then came the wedding, simple and gay,
With the parson to tie the knot,
And a wedding gift from Huldah's pa
Of a strip of the "medder lot."

And there was the house, so snug and warm,
Fit nest for loving birds,
With Huldah moving softly about,
Saying such tender words.



Oh, the old brick oven, where Huldah baked
Her pies to the sunniest brown,
And the spit where the turkeys grew so crisp,
And she in her homespun gown.

Then the strange, sad time, — could he ever forget? —
When his darling was pale and still,
And *something* within a cradle of wood
Gave his heart such a strange, new thrill.

Yes, there she sat now, with her babe on her arm —
His Huldah, his boy, all his own :
And suddenly, somehow, the vision changed.
And the boy had older grown.

Then his heart ached sore, for the boy was dead :
And Huldah, weighted with woe,
Wept there by her baby's still, white face.
Her first-born, " Oh, why must he go ? "

They bore him away, her little child,
With his ringlets of golden hair.
And ever more to the mother's eyes
The world held a vacant chair.



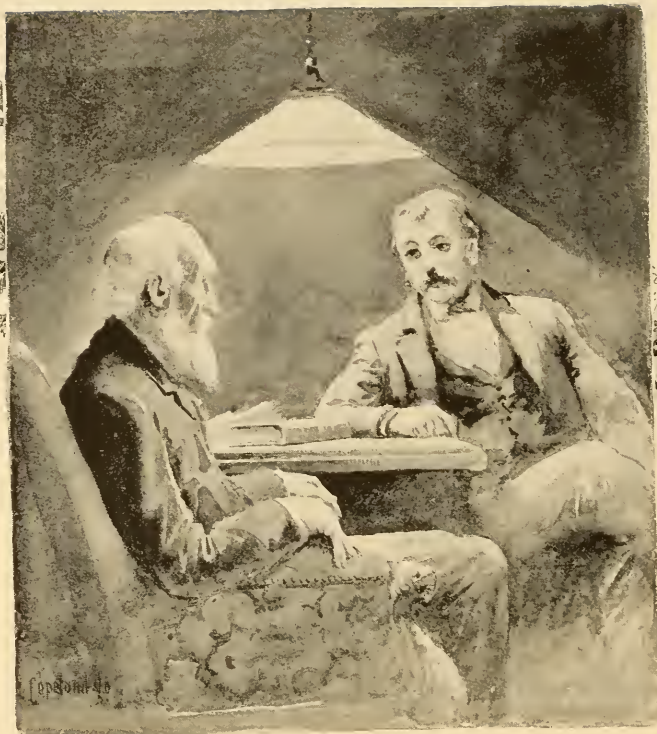


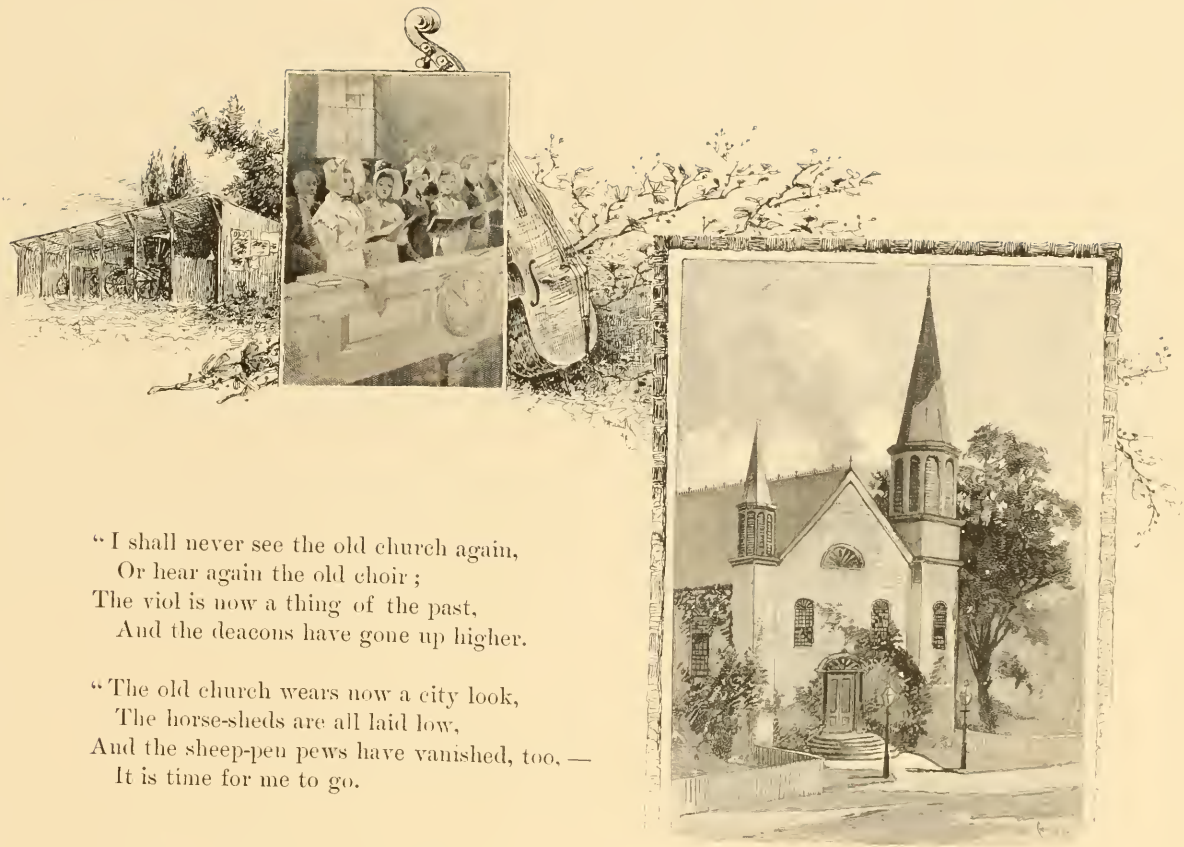
And ever more, on the mother's face,
A strange new sweetness would stay,
For none of the children that came could be
Like the one God called away.

The brown-gold locks of Huldah grew
To white, with the fleeting years ;
And joy and sorrow came to both,
And smiles were followed by tears,

Then Grandfather thought he held her hand
Once more within his own, —
The hand of his Huldah, here, or there,
Before the eternal throne.

He spoke of his thoughts to his son that night,
With his fine face all aglow,
And he added, "Put me by mother, lad,
When I am called to go.





“ I shall never see the old church again,
Or hear again the old choir ;
The viol is now a thing of the past,
And the deacons have gone up higher.

“ The old church wears now a city look,
The horse-sheds are all laid low,
And the sheep-pen pews have vanished, too, —
It is time for me to go.



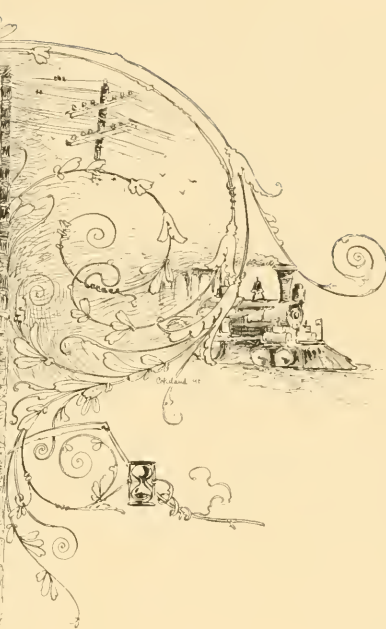
“ Yet I loved them all, I love them now,
They bring your mother so near ;
As I sit and think in the firelight glow,
The past seems very clear.

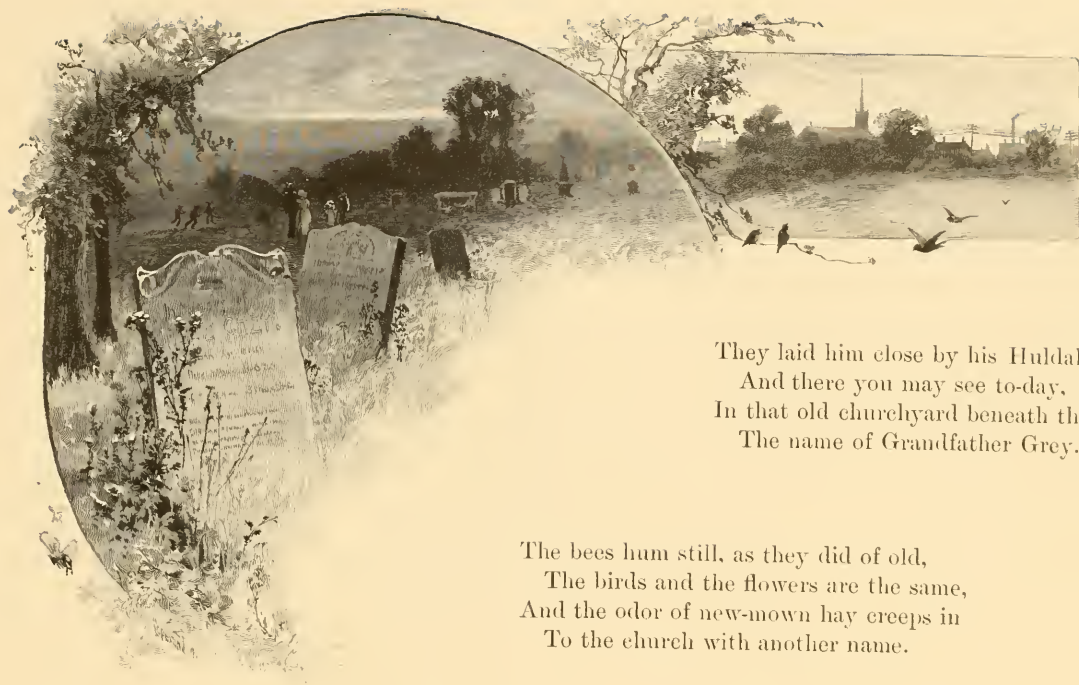
“ Perhaps the times are better now.
I don't feel called to say
If the world is growing better or not,
But I'm glad I've seen this day.

“ The wonders are most too much for me.
When you talk for miles away,
And send your messages round the world.
Yes, I'm glad I've seen this day.

“ Perhaps, when I come to see mother again,
It will all be strange to her ;
Mebbe she'll never know I am deaf,
Or how my old eyes blur.

“ I think I hear your mother speak ;
Good-night, my boy, good-night.”
With a sigh, like a gentle zephyr's breath,
His gentle spirit took flight.



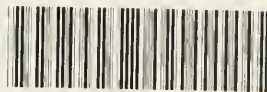


They laid him close by his Huldah's side,
And there you may see to-day,
In that old churchyard beneath the trees,
The name of Grandfather Grey.

The bees hum still, as they did of old,
The birds and the flowers are the same,
And the odor of new-mown hay creeps in
To the church with another name.

Still, fair little children come and go,
And maidens, and lovers tall;
For the world moves on as it ever moved,
And the dear God loveth all.

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